لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

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EDITOR
M. G. AHMAD

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was born in 1836 in Qadian. a village in India. In the eighties of the 19th century, he was called to the office of World Reformer to combat the false Religious Philosophies and to explode the Christian theory of redemption based on the fiction of Christ's death on the Cross and to tell the Christians and Muslims to call off their hope for a second visit from Christ as he had been gathered to his fore-fathers and barred like all mortals from coming back to the world, and that he had come instead as the Promised Messiah.

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The Promised Messiah initiated the Ahmadiyya Movement to revive faith in God, challenging rival churches to a spiritual contest to seek Divine sanction for the religion He favoured, through prayer and appeal to Him for guidance and arbitration in the matter, by means of His signs, to re-establish the glory of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, to expound and disseminate spiritual beauties and moral excellences of the teachings of the Holy Quran, to wean men from war-like tendencies and to educate world opinion in favour of renunciation of war as a means of settling disputes, to infuse hope, faith and courage in the drooping hearts of Muslims and all the depressed races and nations of the world, to warn the exploiters, slave-drivers and pedlars in sin against the evil consequences for their evil ways, to collect under one banner all the true followers of Islam and lovers of peace and to inculcate among them the spirit of tolerance, good will and selfless follow-service and a feeling of true brother-hood.

The Promised Messiah passed away in 1908 and was succeeded by his foremost votary and closest companion, Hazrat Hafiz Haji Hakim Maulvi Noor-ud-Din as Khalifa-tul Masih I. After his death in 1914, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Haji Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, was chosen as Khalifa-tul Masih II. During his 52-year long leadership, the Khalifa-tul Masih II organized a world-girdling chain of mosques and missions. On his death on November 8, 1965, the electoral college named with one accord, Sahibzada Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Promised Messiah's grandson, Khalifa-tul Masih III.

For further information about the Movement, its activities, aims, objectives and literature, enquiries may be addressed to the nearest Ahmadiyya Mission or direct to :

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THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF ISLAM

This is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement which represents true Islam. It deals with religious, ethical, social and economic questions, Islamic mysticism and current topics. It also provides Book Reviews.

It is open to all for discussing problems vital to the religious and spiritual welfare of man, but it does not give any assurance to publish all articles received by the Editor, nor does it accept responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

EDITOR

M. G. AHMAD

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**The papers were read out at the International Conference on Deliverance of Jesus from the Cross held at Commonwealth Institute, London, on 2nd, 3rd, and 4th June, 1978.*

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Muslim Contribution Towards Science

Dr. Naseer Ahmad Khan

Science before the advent of Islam merely meant speculation. The real basis of science, now commonly known as the 'scientific method' is the contribution of Islam to the civilisation of mankind. Starting from the first revelation right upto the last, the Quran emphesises again and again the importance of observation and reflection. Says the Holy Quran, "observe what is in the heavens and the earth" (X. 101), "In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day, and the ship that sails on the sea with that what profits man and the matter that Allah sends down from the sky then gives life therewith to the earth after its death and spreads in it all kinds of animals and the clouds made subservient between heaven and earth, there are surely signs for a people who utilise their reason" (II. 168), "In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, there are surely signs for men of under-

standing, those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of heavens and earth" (III. 189-190).

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) who was the first to submit to the will of Allah, made the acquisition of knowledge compulsary for every muslim man and woman. This search after truth was enjoined to be a life-long process. 'Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave' and 'acqire knowledge even if you have to go to the farthest corner of the globe' are two of the many famous sayings of the Holy Prophet.

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When Ibrahim, the son of the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him, died in infancy, there appeared an eclipse of the sun which some of his followers attributed to the grief which the heavens felt on that great tragedy. The Prophet immediately contradicted and told them that the eclipse was a natural phenomena and had nothing to do with the death or birth of a human being. This incident shows the great genius and scientific approach of the Prophet of Islam.

The emphasis laid by Islam on observation and reason and its practical demonstration by the Prophet of Mecca in his own life-time inspired muslims to seek knowledge from wherever they could and to make the pursuit of scientific knowledge as one of the noblest tradition of their civilisation. Keeping in mind the declaration of the Holy Quran that the heavens and the earth and all that is between them have been made subservient to man, the early muslims threw away all superstition and tried to conquer the forces of nature to their advantage. The scientific era thus started with the advent of Islam. Within a century the muslims had translated much of the Greek classics and had established great schools of learning and science at various centres of their great empire. The next few centuries saw the flowering of muslim science from Baghdad to Cordova. Great Universities and scientific observatories were set up. Scholars from Asia and Europe

flocked to these centres of excellence. Many great books on science were written and astronomical Almanacs were published.

Muslims contributed to almost every branch of science which then existed. Not only that, they created new subjects of research. Detailed description of these contributions is not possible here but we can have a glimpse of their efforts by briefly mentioning the various fields of scientific endeavour which saw the blossoming of the muslim mind.

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Early Efforts

Some of the early Arab converts to Islam belonged to the Arab tribes who had entered into the service of the Roman and the Greek empires and therefore had some contact with Greek and Roman learning. The great impetus given to observation and intellectual activity by Islam inspired them to contribute to the development of science and technology.

Muslims stretched their empire from Pyrenese in the West to the borders of China in the East between A. D. 634 and 750. They took major part in the seaborne trade from India to Egypt and contributed a lot to sailing. When Muslims took over Syria and set up the first Caliphate at Damascus in A.D. 661, they gathered educated men of science to Damascus and founded an astronomical observatory as early as A.D, 700. Later on when Caliphate went over to Abbasids from Banu Umayyads in A.D. 749, they set up their Caliphate at Baghdad. The second Abbasid Caliph Al-Mansur brought educated muslims to Baghdad and got the various scientific works translated. Third and fourth Abbasid Caliphs Harun Rashid and Mamun Rashid also did the same and Al-Mamun set up a "House of Wisdom" (*bait-ul-Hikma*) for the translation of Greek scientific works.

Abbasid Caliphs appointed different Muslims to translate Greek science in Arabic from Syriac and from Greek. Chief translator was a Nestorian, Hunayn Ibn Ishaq, — A. D. 809

to 873—who translated most of Galen's medical writings and began the translation of ptolemey's Astronomy. His work was continued by some ninety pupils, the chief of whom were his son, Ishaq died in AD. 910, who translated the works of ptolemey and Euclid, and his nephew, Hubaysh, who translated the works of Hippocrates and Dioscorides. Translation of Republic of Plato, logical works of Aristotle and mathematical works of Euclid, Archimidese and others were amongst the major deeds of this team.

Astronomy

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Astronomy was a practical subject because of the widespread belief in Astrology, but also because Muslims needed to know the direction of Mecca for their prayers. In fact first advances in Mathematics and Astronomy were made by Muslims.

As Abbasid Caliph Al-Mamun got ptolemy's astronomical research translated, he also founded an astronomical observatory at Baghdad in A. D. 829. Here observations were begun by Al-Farghani (died in A.D. 850) and continued by-Al-Battani (A.D. 858 — A.D. 929) and Thabit Ibn Qurran (A.D. 826—A.D. 901). These men came from Harran in Mesopotamia, where the ancient Babylonian religion, with its astrology and its worship of stars, put in a lot of efforts to solve the mystery of stars. Al-Battani obtained values for the obliquity of the ecliptic and the precession of the equinoxes which were more accurate than those of Ptolemy and he discovered that the sun's eccentricity was changing (in modern terms, that the earth's orbit is a varying ellipse).

Another scientist working at Cairo in the time of Al-Hakim was the astronomer, Ibn Yunis (died in A.D. 1009). He gathered together the records of observations made in the previous two hundred years and prepared from them "Hakemite Astronomical Tables", so named in honour of his patron.

Astronomy arose in the western caliphate with Al-Zarkali

(A.D. 1029 — A.D. 1087) of Cordova in Spain, who drew up the Toledian astronomical tables in A.D. 1080 and modified the Ptolemaic scheme of the heavens by suggesting an elliptical deferent for the epicycle of the planet Murcury. The Ptolemaic system was much critisized by the Spanish Muslims, as they desired a physically real system of the world and on this philosophical expressions were given by Ibn Rushd known as Averroes (A.D. 1125—1198) of Saragossa, and wss continued by Abu Bakar (died A.D. 1185) of Granada and Alpetrugius (died A.D. 1200). They rejected ptolemey's device of the epicycle on the grounds that the planets must revolve about a physically real central body and not a geometrical point. Hence they endeavoured to work out a system of the heavens that was physically feasible.

Further west, Hulago Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan sacked Baghdad in A.D. 1258 and finally ended the eastern Abbasid Caliphate. Hulago Khan founded an observatory at Maragha in Azerbaidjan, south of Tabriz in Persia, and placed it under the direction of his vizier, Nasir-ud Din (A.D. 1201-1274) who was himself an astronomer. Here a library of some 400,000 volumes was gathered together, while astronomers were brought from places as far distant as China and Spain. From China came Fu Meng-Chi, and from Andalusia, Al-Maghribi, who wrote a monograph on the calenders which was as good as gregorian. Finally, after twelve years of observations the Ilkohanic tables were brought over by Nasir-ud-Din and his astronomers.

Chemistry

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The conception that man is a microcosm of the whole world, which throughout history has found favour with the alchemists and religious mystics, was taken up by the "Brethren of Purity" and made the basis of their world system. They were indeed the first to work out in detail the consequen-

ces of the idea that man is a microcosm or an epitome of the whole universe, finding analogies and correspondences between all aspects of the anatomy and physiology of man and the structure. In the specific field of chemistry they divided natural substances into two main classes, 'bodies' and 'spirits' with the view that man was made up of a body and soul. 'Spirits' were volatile and 'bodies' were nonvalatile substances.

The muslim alchemists suggested that a metal could be transmuted by changing quantitatively its elementary constitution. On the practical side, muslim alchemists were notable in that they used the balance and studied chemical operations quantitatively. They were also acquanited with chemicals unknown to the Greeks such as the mineral acids and saltpetre which they called "snow of China".

The most important name in chemistry is that of Jabar Ibn Hayyan, known as Geber in Europe, who wrote several books and theses on chemistry. He discovered sulphuric and nitric acids. He also chemically experimented and prepared lead carbonate. He is the man who initially purified Arsenic and Antimony from sulphates. Almost all of his chemical works were translated in seveal European languages. Potash and silver nitrate are also the discoveries of Muslim chemists. Jabar Ibn Hayyan seems to have lived in the second half of the eighth century. It is now held by scholars, however, that the writings belong to the late ninth or early tenth centnry.

Medicine

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The physician Al-Razi also wrote some important treatises on alchemy. The hypothesis of the transmutation of the elements was rjected by the philosopher—physician Ibn Sina and by another great scholar Al-Biruni (died in A.D. 1048). Al-Biruni also worked on Indian science. He himself measured the specific gravity of many substances attaining a high degree of accuracy.

Al-Razi (A.D. 865—A.D. 925) known in Europe as Rhazes, born in Iran was the first muslim scholar on medical matters, who studied and worked at Baghdad. Al-Razi's works, the best known being Al-Hawi the "Comprehensive Book", which was the most popular at that time.

Al-Hawi was in ten volumes which included his works on two hundred different subjects of medicine. His research and treatment extended to small-pox, measles, stones in the kidney and the bladder and his curative method was in use till the beginning of 19th century.

Another persian physician who wrote a comprehensive encyclopedia was Abbas-ad-Dawia. This book was a complete art of Medicine known as Al-Kunash Al-Malaki.

Another great muslim scholar and physician was Ibn Sina (A.D. 980-A.D. 1037) of Bokhara known as Avicenna in Europe. He was both a physician and a philosopher. His most famous work was "Cannon of Medicine" commented to be the culmination and masterpiece of Arabic systemization. It was translated into Latin in twelfth century and continued to dominate the teaching of medicine in Europe until 17th century. There were many editions published in 15th, 16th and 17th centuries.

Many Hospitals were formed in Baghdad, Iraq, in the tenth century. The founders were wealthy people such as viziers who gave handsome amounts of endowments to run the hospitals. Travelling clinics were also founded and hospitals in the major cities were formed. One of the greatest hospitals was the Mansuri in Cairo founded in A.D. 1284 which had accomodation for 8000 patients. There were separate wards for different diseases besides a number of physicians and surgeons and attendants, of both sexes.

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Ibn Al-Nafis (A.D. 1210-88) a physician in Cairo criticised the works of Galen and presented the idea that the dividing wall of the heart, the septum was solid and quite devoid of the pores permitting the passage of blood. He argued that blood

must flow from the right to left ventricle of the heart through the lungs. Thus Ibn Al-Nafis gave the idea of the lesser circulation of the blood.

Abul Qassim or Abulcasis, (died A.D. 1013) a court physician in Cardova at the time of Kingdom of Andalusia, wrote a great medical handbook in thirty sections, the last one dealing with surgery, and surgical instruments.

The time when in Europe diseases were being treated with the performance of religious rites, the Muslims had a real science of medicine with 400 books on the subject written by some 300 devoted writers.

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Mathematics and Optics

From Greeks, muslims did not learn more than the theorems of Euclid and Pythagoras. Most of the contributions in the fields of Mathematics, Algebra and conic sections and Trigonometry were the result of the thorough research of muslims themselves and these researches did not have the faintest taint of any thing Greek or Roman.

Al-Khwarizmi (died A.D. 835) introduced the numerals and methods of calculation to the muslim world. He worked out methods for finding mathematically the square root of number.

Later on Ibn-al-Haythan or Alhazen (A.D. 1039) wrote a famous book *kitab-Al-Manzair*. In this book, he has opposed the theories of Ptolemy and Euclid that visual rays travel from eye to the object, instead that light travels from the object to the eye. He has also discussed the famous "Alhazen's problem" in which he solved a fourth degree equation. He also calculated the height of earth's atmosphere as a result of his experiments with spherical and parabolic mirror, and in respect of the refraction of light in passing through a transparent medium, he discovered the principle of magnifying lens.

He opposed the theory of Euclid and Ptolemy and other ancients, that the eye sends out rays of light from the object

seen, light spreading out spherically from any source. His experimental study of magnifying glasses brought him near to the modern theory of convex lenses and on the subject of refraction in general, he showed Ptolemy's crude law, that the angle of incidence is proportional to the angle of refraction for a given interface, to be true only at small angles.

Al-Masudi (died A.D. 957) of Cairo wrote an encyclopedia which contains the first description of wind mill. Such mills had a vertical axis of rotation and were fitted with sails similar to those of ship. Other muslim mathematicians were Maslama-al-Majriti (from Madrid) who lived in Cordova, Spain, and died A.D. 1007. In the eleventh century, the Muslim scholars i.e., mathematicians—astronomers were Ibn-as-Samh and Ibn-as-Saffar and an astrologer Ibn-Abir Rija or Abenregel. In the twelfth century, the most famous were Jabir Ibn Aflah or Geber and Al-Bitruji of Alpetragius. Jabir Ibn-Aflah is famous for his trigonometry.

Later on the persian poet and mathematician Omar Khayyam (died A.D. 1123) developed the mathematics of Al-Khwarizmi discussing cubic equation while the latter had only dealt with quadratics. Some other Muslim scholars moved to Cairo in the reign of Al Hakim (A D. 996—1020) who had set up a "House of science" in A.D. 995.

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Paper Making and Printing

Paper making is one of the oldest technologies in the Muslim world. The first paper mill in Islam was set up at Samarkand in A.D. 751 and the second at Baghdad in A.D. 793. Later on this art was spread to Egypt, Spain and ultimately to the whole of Europe by A.D. 1100. The first muslim description of the printing methods occurs in the works of the Persian scholar Al-Banakati (A.D. 1200) while the first block-printing in Islam took place in Egypt sometime between 900 and A.D. 1350.

At Tabriz, paper money was printed in A.D. 1294 bearing both Chinese and Arabic characters and a few years later, the

Persian Physician Rashid-al-Din (A.D. 1247-1318) improved the technology.

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Botany

"Book of Plants" of a distinguished historian Abu-Hanifa ad-Dinawari (A.D. 895) was quite popular in his time. Most of the important works were included in the extensive research of Ibn-al-Baytar of Malagh (A.D. 1248) who was originally a pharmacologist but made valuable contributions to Botany. He collected about 1400 herbs and plants with medicinal properties.

Logic and Mentaphysics

It should not be improper to mention briefly works of great muslim philosophers of their time to show that muslim intellectuals not only made efforts in science but also wrote on laws, ethies and systems of life.

Islam has produced many great theologians and philosophers of its time. The earliest was Al-Ashari (A.D. 935) who presented the doctrine of sunnite formulations. Two other scholars are reckoned to be the great philosophers of the world, al-Farabi (A.D. 950) and Ibn Sina or Aviceuna (A.D. 1037). They had worked out a philosophy which was a form of neoplatonism. Their philosophy was different from Aristotle as they were monothiestic while Aristotle was polythiestic. Their philosophy was in the light of the Holy Quran.

In A.D. 1090 a brilliant theologian Al-Ghazali by reading, studying and extensive reaserch wrote a lucid and objective account of the methadology and system of life.

Ibn Khuldoon is the first writer on sociology, economics and politics and is also famous for his "theory of soveriegnty" about the ruler and the ruled.

Alberuni, who also worked on Physics and Mathematics, wrote a History of India in which he explained Indian religions and customs and social classes in a very unprejudiced and

sympathetic way. The first geography of Siberia and Northern Europe was also written by Alberuni.

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Conclusion

Some of the Western writers are of the view that the Muslims were not the original thinkers and that whatever they contributed to Western thought was basically of the Southern Europe and Greek origin. Justice Muneer has discussed this at length and disproved this contention, based partly on prejudice and partly on misunderstanding.

No doubt the Greeks were the first to apply reason to their thoughts and writings but their reasoning was mainly limited to speculative thought which is known as philosophy or metaphysics. The main contributors were Euclid, Pythogoras, physicians, Hippocrates and Galen, Aristotle and Plato. They never actually experimented to inaminate matter, with a view to discovering its properties, tendencies and changes by observation, inference, experiment and confirmation as done by the Muslim scholars. Romans were not also a speculative people at all and they never entered the field of philosophy and science. The west got nothing from Romans except Latin, law and roads.

As against this, the recurring injunction of the Holy Quran was the observation of the Universe. The Muslims were required to harness the heavens, the earth and all that is between or in them. As a result of this and in a very short time, researches and achievements of Muslims extended to every field of knowledge, with a mass of literature, which was translated into other languages from Arabic and remained a course of studies in the Universites of Europe till 16th century and latter became a starting point of European research. In places such as Baghdad, Kufa, Basra, Cairo and Cordova, great Universities were founded which acquired such a great fame that people from all over the world, particularly Europe,

began to come to these institutions in search of knowledge.

W. Montgomery Watt writes in his book "The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe" (Islamic Survey)

"When one becomes aware of the full extent of Arab experimenting, Arab thinking and Arab writing, one sees that without the Arabs, European science and philosophy would not have developed when they did. The Arabs were no mere transmitters of Greek thought, but genuine beareas, who both kept alive the disciplines they had been taught and extended their range. When about 1000 A.D. Europeans became seriously interested in the science and philosophy of their Saracen enemies these discipline were at the zenith ; and the Europeans had to learn all they could from the Arabs before they themselves could make further advances".

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Did Jesus Die on the Cross?*

by Miss Anna M. Tolano

HUGO TOLL, chief physician at the Deaconess Institue Ersta, Sweden, born 1858, died 1943, made a detailed study of the question of whether Jesus actually died on the cross, in his book "Dog Jesus pa korset?" (Did Jesus Die on the Cross?") (Wahlstrom and Widstrand, two editions, 1928).

Toll attempts to present the extensive research on the life of Jesus which followed the critical break-through of biblical history during the 19th century. He also makes an attempt to enter the discussions on the reliability of the four Gospels as testimony, but considers himself unable to take a definite stand for or against the esentially contradictory opinions on this subject held by theologians of different schools. He finds it justifiable, rather, to base his opinions on all four of them, as they appear in the new Swedish translation, as in his view (and also it seems in that of modern theological and historical authorities) there are many probable reasons for assuming that most of the facts presented in the Gospels concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus are essentially reliable. He gains support from the works of Bousset, Harnack and Fries. Toll is not blind to the contradictions between the Gospels, but he regards these rather as evidence, if only indirect, of the authenticity of the accounts. It is clear, he says, that at least there is no conspiracy in the presentation. And he continues: To prove beyond doubt the correctness of the given facts is naturally impossible in most cases, and any conclusions based upon them will therefore always be uncertain. But when there is nothing to contradict a related fact, then arguments of probability have to

*read by SVEND HANSEN of Denmark

prevail. The accounts are simple and ingenuous and show no signs at all of being "improved". And clearly there was no need to invent incidents. The ones at hand were sufficiently full of significance to form a basis for the faith of the disciples—which for the world of that time was highly explicable, but which now seems fantastic. Just as we can well understand now how the first Christians could draw their conclusion from the related events, so do we at present do nothing more than to make a different interpretation, and draw other conclusions from the same premises.

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Toll then makes a reconstruction of the violence to which Jesus was subjected, to his scourge and crucifixion, supported by available information on the procedures used by the Romans in these forms of punishment, and on the nature of the cross, etc. He claims that the wounds and other injuries inflicted on the victims would not necessarily cause death. According to Eusebius, who had occasion to make observations on such violence during Diocletian persecutions, it was usual in crucifixion for death not to occur until several days later, resulting from exhaustion, hunger, or attacks by birds of prey or other wild animals (cited after Hase: Geschichte Jesu). The thieves who were crucified together with Jesus had to be clubbed to death so that the execution could be completed and the bodies taken down from the cross before the Sabbath eve.

In the case ef Jesus, on the other hand, the mental and physical shock resulted after only six hours in fainting and a state of deep unconsciousness which was difficult to distinguish from death.

That Jesus was still alive when the soldier speared his side is, according to Toll, incontestable, as blood flowed from the wound, which would not happen after death. The "water" that ran out, according to the narrative, is interpreted by Toll as a discharge of lymph, which had been formed under the skin through the scourging, and he supposes that the soldier, when he walked past the cross, from pure mischief made a small

superficial stab in one of these water-blisters, which he couldn't leave alone. Thus according to Toll it need not be assumed that the spear wound was deep and of any significance for the question of life or death.

In a separate chapter Toll gives an account of medico-scientific aspects of life and death, fainting and "apparent death", and goes on to a discussion of the refutations of the hypotheses of apparent death concerning the death of Jesus, which time and again have appeared in the literature. He pays special attention to the critisms of the view that Jesus did not die on the cross put forward by Hase (Geschichte Jesu, 1872), Weiss (Das Leben Jesu, 1882) and Delff (Grundzuge der Entwick lungsgeschichte der Religion, 1886), in particular, and points out on what weak grounds their "counter-evidence" is based. Toll states that to judge from the Gospels Jesus was not anointed ; if this had been testified, the hypothesis of apparent death would of course have lacked all foundation from the start.

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If one accepts that Jesus was only apparently dead when he was placed in the tomb, then according to Toll the subsequent events would have their natural explanation : Jesus awoke to life, the stone that had been placed against the entrance to the tomb was thrown aside by an earthquake or was perhaps forced away from the inside by Jesus himself. And in his white linen cloth, sitting on the stone, he gave the women who came to the tomb on Easter morning the vision of an angel.

Of great interest is Toll's comment that the difficulty in reconciling the accounts of Jesus journeyings (Emmuas etc.) on the same day that he left the tomb, in the codition which his feet must have been in after the nailing on the cross, can be eliminated if the fact is considered that in some places in the Gospel of St. John (chapter 20, verses 20 and 25) only wounds in the side and in the hands are mentioned. Toll made a

thorough study of the literature concerning the teachinique of crucifixion and considered that in the secular literature he found good support for the possibility, or even probability, that the feet were left untouched by the nailing.

This is an extract from "Korset och Graven. En nutida lakares tankar om Jesu dod och uppstandelse" (The Cross and the Tomb. Viewpoints of a present-day physician on the Death and Resurrection of Jesus") by Gunnar Nystrom, M.D., former Professor of Surgery at Uppsala University, Sweden. Published 1950, Almqvist and Wiksells Boktryckeri AB, Uppsala.

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New View-points on Jesus Activity Beyond Palestine

By Ladislav Filip M.D.

The biography of Jesus seems to me to have been somewhat neglected by rationalist historians. They failed mainly because of the Roman-Byzantic Great Schims. West European Christianity was, by a wall of dogmatism and intolerance, kept aloof from many sources that could have offered it valuable information about the life of Jesus.

The great theologist Rudolf Bultmann summed the situation up by saying that we know next to nothing about the historical Jesus from Christian sources.

This symposium, so appropriately organized by the Ahmadiyya Movement, presents an opportunity of throwing more historical light on the life and conduct of this extraordinary personality.

—(I)—

If we succeed in proving that Jesus was still alive after the year 35 A.D. it would be clear that he survived the agony on the cross.

That this was so is testified to even by Christian sources. First, in the Acts of the Apostles 25 : 19, we find the trial of Paulus by the Roman governor Festus described. Paul was accused by the Jews. "But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive". This solemn trial took place in the presence of King Agrippa II, and the chief captians and principal men of the city. Its historical importance can hardly be doubted.

The second Christian testimony reports that Jesus was alive at the end of the first century. It refers to Ignatius,

the second bishop of Antioch. When escorted to Rome to be thrown to the beasts he wrote a letter to the community of Christians of Smyrna saying "that he (Jesus) is in flesh since his resurrection, I both know and believe".

Both these Christian testimonies show that Jesus still lived at those times and hence that he did not die on the cross.

—(II)—

Let us now deal with the question of the so-called "Parusy that did not take place"—Die ausgebliebene Parusie of the German theology.

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In the Christian religion parusy means the coming back, or the second advent of Christ from heaven. It is for them a warrant and hope for a just reward for their life waited for in eternity. Parusy is promised in Matthew 24 : 27 : For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. This belief was so eargerly held after the departure of Jesus from Palestine, that the apostle Peter felt obliged to tone it down in his second letter (2 p. 3,4).

The Jewish apocalyptic texts show that the Jews rather expected the Messiah to install first his kingdom of bliss and abundance for one thousand years before the Last Judgment would take place.

According to me, this firm belief in his return was based on his own words given in John 14, 2, 3 : In my Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also.

The followers of Jesus expected patiently the fulfilment of his promise which had such a near term in Luke 9 : 27 ; But I (Jesus) tell you of a truth, there are some standing here, who shall not taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God.

But not even their sons lived to see it. Both Paul and

Peter felt therefore that the words of Jesus had to be explained to believers in a sense so as not to create discontent because the parusy did not take place. This theological turn was easy to perform : the promised mansions were raised from earth to heaven. An agreeable future is easily accepted and trusted. The return of Jesus and the installation of his kingdom of affluence was prophesied even in the 15th century.

The Christian believers of the 20th century still ask when will Christ return to earth ? On this point a theological discussion about how to explain this, developed in Switzerland in the thirties. The leading theologian Fritz Buri summed up the discussion by suggesting : first to study and explain the historical situation of those times ; next to discuss how the contemporaries understood and felt it ; and finally to use such a historical basis when counselling in Christ's name the believers in their actual troubles and hopes.

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A very probable explanation of this question seems to me to be the following one : John's words about Jesus going to look for a place of refuge were very similar to those of the President of my country Eduard Benes in the year 1938, after the fateful sentence of Munich against my fatherland. President Benes, a defeated statesman, had at that time to look around for a shelter and a place for himself and his suite in order to be able ultimately to start a campaign of liberation. Such a situation was destined to confront many political leaders in this century.

So do I understand the words of John not as metaphysics but as a mention of a historic event. We know that the author of John' gospel differs from the synoptic ones by what is called "Pneumatism". If we manage to remove this distortion we can get welcome new information even from this source. None of the synoptics mentions e.g. Jesus considering going out of the reach of Rome eastward and continuing his mission there.

The scholar of history should then ascertain whether there was any real hope of a shelter for Jesus out of the reach of Rome. It was then the capital of an overwhelming power and his supporters had hardly any hope of finding a refuge anywhere. But J. Rawlinson does not agree with the famous historian Gibbon on the "long arm of Roman influence". In his opinion the Parthian empire was larger than that of Rome and in the six wars waged among them, only once did Rome win a persuasive victory.

Fortunately enough priests did not have in Parthia as great influence as the Jewish ones had in Palestine. The Parthians were tolerant in religion and therefore the Jewish diaspore was in Mesopotamia in full bloom. Jesus could have expected a good reception: First, from the government because the Parthians did help the Maccabeans a hundred years before and because Jesus was now an enemy of their enemies. Secondly, he would be welcome to the people because of his bringing a message of love, peace and trancendental hope.

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But after the year 70 A.D., Jerusalem being destroyed, Jesus could no longer think of any political return to Palestine.

The first refuge of Jesus was in the traditional place of Jewish exiles, that is Damascus, porbably among the Essenes of the Community of the New Covenant. But soon Jesus had to feel the hatred of the Jewish hierarchy. It hired Saul to kidnap Jesus and bring him back to Golgotha. This persecution did not stop even after the victory of Jesus over Saul as can be deduced from the advice of Abu Huariah: O Jesus, move from one place to another, lest thou shouldst be recognised and persecuted!

As apparently Jesus was not safe in Damascus, his hosts tried to find for him a shelter more reliable. The range of the then political situation in Mesopotamia can give us an idea whether Jesus' hopes were realistic.

Although a peace had been signed between Rome and

Parthia by king Fraates IV, for a period of one hundred years, reaching to 36 A.D., the Romans mingled in the dynastic quarrels of Parthia so that Artabanus III had to oppose their interventions. Nevertheless King Volagases had soon after to meet them in open war.

Under Artabanus Jesus had the best hopes because a Jew, by the name of Asinai, was installed in the starapy of Babylonia. His adventurous career is described by Josephus Flavius in Antiq. 18, 12. For fifteen years was Asinai's rule excellent but then he was poisoned by his sister-in-law. His brother Anilai ruled than but as a brigand. was defeated and killed. A terrific pogrom of Jews in Seleukia followed. So vanished the possibility of Jesus' refuge in Babylonia about 40 A.D.

A report of Jesus' second potential shelter in Mesopotamia is preserved in the apocryphic correspondence of Jesus and King Abgar IV of Edessa. Probably this is not a genuine document, yet it is worth studying. It is reported in the Church History of Eusebius who claims having got it from the archives of Edessa. May be that Bishop Kune of Edessa, trying to raise the prestige of the Christian community by this pious falsehood had it written according to a local tradition about some negotiations that had taken place between Damascus and Edessa on behalf of Jesus. The letter does not boast of any splendid success. Its point is only an unaccepted invitation. I feel this modesty to be strong evidence in favour of the historicity of such negotiations.

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The third place where Jesus could have hope of a kind reception was the kingdom of Adiabene. The Jewish proselytes, the well known and esteemed king Izates and his mother Helene sat on the throne. Both are historically well documented.

The historian could now confidently answer the question of Fritz Buri which was the historical basis of the belief in Jesus coming back, in his Parusy, and why it was not realised.

It would be as follows : Jesus had lost his political cam-

paign in Palestine for the throne of Jerusalem. Being the grandson of Herod the Great and having inherited the right to the throne, he hoped to be able to institute the Kingdom of God on earth without any help of swords or daggers from the Zealots. Therefore, he resolved to gather the lost sheep of Israel and at the same time to preach his own teaching abroad. He meant to maintain the law of Moses without the Mosaic claim of the Jewish monoply of salvation. But the sorry political developments in Palestine, ending with the cruel first war of the Jews against Rome frustrated his plan. This hindered him from "coming back" and join his followers in Palestine. This is why his Parusy could not take place.

—(III)—

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The third point of my paper concerns the medieval legend of the "Travelling Jew" or the "Errant Jew", Ahasverus or Buttadeo. The origin of this legend has not been explained till today. His origin can be first traced in the Chronicle of Matthew of Paris who died in 1259. Its text speaks of an Armenian Bishop telling in England the story of a man called Josephus Cartaphilus. This man affrimed having served as a door-watch in the pretorium of Jerusalem during Jesus' trial and having slapped him on his departure towards Golgotha and urging him to hurry there. Jesus condemned him to linger till his coming back. That was why this man lived in this world until those days. He dwelt in both Armenias and dealt with simple people and clergy as well, as he had been baptised. Toward the end of each century the man gets sick but recovers and is rejuvenated, and continue his penalty.

This legend spread around all Europe and became in the 18th century a favourite theme for famous authors. The hero is mostly called Ahasverus. This is perhaps a reminder of the Book of Esther and of its Mesopotamic historic base.

When I learnt from Ahmadiyya sources that the Prophet Isa was given in Islamic tradition the epithet of the "Travell-

ing Prophet" or "Leader of Travellers" I for the first time wondered if the hero of the legend would have had something in common with Jesus' activities in Mesopotamia. They were both Jews and both travelled out of religious motives.

Yet it was difficult to explain the change of favourable qualities of the model into a bad character of the definite product of Christian phantasy. We must not forget that this metamorphosis took place of course in the Christian and not in the Islamic mind. Had the Christian author dared to describe Jesus' travels in the trials of Ahasverus he would have been put on the stake on the spot.

But why did this lengend appear in Europe only in the 13th century? It was not until later that I grasped the impact and extent of the Nestorian Church on the history of Asia and could admire the Mongol Nestorians who tried to take Jerusalem for Chritianity in the "Crusade of the yellow" A.D. 1259. As a further step I learned more about the sociology of the crusades: not only rich gentry and hierarchy took part in them, but a great burden was put on an immense mass of simple and poor believers. The cruel fight being ended, the individual members of the crusade had opportunity to learn different views about Christ than their own dogmatic ones. Just for the eastern Christian Jesus was more a man than God. For some Christian heretics he was only a man. Following the Kinitic creed he was their progeny and had some share in Judas' suicide. In Islam he was a man, a Prophet and a forerunner of Muhammad. The crusaders learnt from Christian heretics of more different aspects of this wonderful character. It is plain that the humiliating traits and stains had to be shifted from Jesus on to a scape-goat. In the mediaeval Europe naturally and only on to a jew.

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This is why the "travelling Jew", originally being the travelling prophet Isa, appeared in Europe with the end of the crusades.

—(IV)—

The last point of my paper concerns the relation of Jesus to Buddhism. A certain similarity between the Christian and the Buddhist movements and later churches was striking the Christian missionaries and tradesmen who came from Europe to India like Marco Polo. More striking was the liturgy and ritual than the dogma. One must not forget that the original teaching of Gautama was not a religion, but an attempt to find the solution of the philosphical question how to avoid suffering.

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It is hardly probable that the similarity would be a mere chance. The opinion of Seydel that it was only Christianity that learnt from Buddhism and not also vice-versa is to be rejected. How could it be, if Buddha's teaching tends to suppress any desire and longed for the nirvana, whilst the teaching of Jesus came that his sheep should have a life and have it more abundantly ? (John 10, 10)

Buddha cared little for religious questions. Jesus on the contrary having fully accepted the creed of his fathers fought for its pure humanity against Jewish clergy and the Pharisees.

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam and his co-workers collected facts about Jesus' journey to Kashmir. The archaeologist Prof. Kh. Hasnain enlarged them. These tell us, and I accept it, that Jesus may have reached India at an age of about 60 years.

He lived under the name of Yuz Asaf in Kashmir and preached also in the neighbouring regions following the opinion of P. J. Nehru. He ascertained in this tolerant atmosphere of the futility and selfishness of the monopolistic Jewish claim of world salvation "only through the Jews". He felt being bound to preach "to all nations" without any difference (Mat. 28, 19). He might have preached mostly to simple people but when opportunity offered he discussed moral and religious matters with scholars of all creeds.

The situation in Kashmir was favourable for the realization of his ultimate plan : renewing his effort to institute the Kingdom of God on earth. The Kashmir kingdom was situated in the centre of the vast Indoscythian empire founded by Kadfises I and governed then by an equally successful warrior and statesman Kanishka the First. It was the centre of the Gandhara Indo-Hellenistic culture, and was equipped even with a well-known university at Taxila.

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Being a good statesman, Kanishka longed for a common moral bond for the many nations ruled by him. He sought therefore information from Buddhist monks. But he did not like the differences of views of the many monks he invited to him. On the advice of the philosopher Parshwa he invited fifteen hundred Buddhist scholars to a council in Kashmir. It was the fourth one by the Mahayanan counting.

The king was so pleased with the outcome of its discussions that he paid great homage to the participants on its conclusion and then performed an unusual political deed : He handed over the complete administration of the kingdom of Kashmir to the co-operative sangha of Buddhist monks whose leader was the wise philosopher Nagardjuna.

What made him act like this? He might have been impressed by such a tolerant and democratic managing of the council and of its prompt solution of the problem how to unify the teaching of so many Buddhist sects.

But whence came the idea to hand over even the civil administration i.e , the political one, to a religious order ? In this respect Buddha's view was quite apposite : He left his throne and family to be able to meditate in solitude. In Kosala he pondered on the question whether it was possible for a king to perform his duties with absolute justice. His solution is apparent from the fact that, invited to take once more his own throne, he declined. No wish for power or dominance. His direction for his monks was also clear: When you enter a

community to beg for your food, behave like a bee: Take your nectar from the bloom but do not harm its shape, colour or scent! Well, do not mingle with politics.

If not the Buddhist monks who then brought the idea of an ecclesiastical ruling of a kingdom to king Kanishka?

Was not it perhaps a man knowing the order of Jahwe: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation! 2M. 19, 6? Was it not the man who had made an unsuccessful attempt to realize this in Palestine? A man who got by subjective and objective ways of perception a deep knowledge of the unlike effects of different ways of ruling and of different rulers.

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Possibly was it the man who forged for his disciples the basic instruction of ruling in Luke 22, 25: "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them.....but ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that serves." Did not Jesus recognise in Ashoka his own conception of the ruling business?

Was it the preacher of the "sower" in Kashmir, Yuz Asaf, who not only discussed the hinayanama teaching with Buddhists eager to acquire higher merits than having no desires, but to deserve them by self-sacrifice?

Was not this a man who had the right to see this unique opportunity as a reward from his Lord for hardships suffered under the burden of his service of Love?

Is it possible to doubt then, that this turn-over in Buddhism i.e., from the ascetic and selfish teaching of hinayanama to that of mahayanama, to this "Renaissance of Buddhism", or as the Czech indologue V. Lesny has put it, to the "Messianic Buddhism", was catalyzed by Yuz Asaf and that it crystalized in Jesus' inspiring king Kanishka to install the Buddhist rule in Kashmir. Certainly this was a "kingdom of God" for Jesus.

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The Statement issued by the British Council of Churches' Committee for relationship with People of Other Faiths

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We note that the Ahmadiyya Muslim movement in Britian has organised a conference in London from 2nd to 4th June, on the theme 'Deliverance of Jesus from the Cross'. We read that topics to be discussed, at the Conference centre round one of the principal tenets of the 89 year-old Ahmadiyya Movement, that Jesus was taken down from the Cross by his disciples, and after recovering from his wounds travelled secretly to Iran, Afghanistan and Kashmir, eventually dying a natural death in Kashmir, and being buried in a tomb still to be found in Srinager today. We recall that the Ahmadiyya Movement came into existence in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, in the Eastern Punjab region of the Indian sub-continent, and that the movement began as a result of the preaching and activities of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

We are reluctant to make any public comment on the London conference. Orthodox Islamic authorites have for a long time repudiated as non-Quranic the Ahmadiyya claim that Jesus died a natural death after going to Kashmir: orthodox Muslims in London should therefore perhaps be the ones to do any necessary commenting on this London conference and its theme. Our reluctance also stems from our awareness that Christianity has often indulged in aggressive and negative attacks on the central tenets of other religions, attacks of a sort comparable to these Ahmadiyya attacks on the central Christian tenet: we do not wish to appear over-defensive when such attacks are directed at us.

However, in view of the publicity given to this conference in a way calculated to stir up controversy, we feel bound to make three comments:

1. We re-affirm our belief in the historicity of the crucifixion and death of Jesus which is attested by the four gospels and by the unanimous testimony of early Christian tradition: we recognize that the death of Jesus Christ on the cross may seem a scandal and an affront to divine justice, but we believe that in the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross we see the love of God which suffers on behalf of others and which does not forgive without a cost:

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2. We look forward to conversations in the future (in an unpublicised setting) between Muslims of the Ahmadiyya Movement and Christians, in London and elsewhere, for a mutual sharing of convictions on the meaning of God's compassionate and merciful nature, and on questions relating to the Significance of Jesus:

3. Although we do not agree that there is firm evidence for any visit by Jesus to Central Asia or the Indian sub-continent, we fully accept the fact that the figure of Jesus, whom we believe to be the living Christ, belongs to all nations and countries, and that all links between the Christian movement and different cultures in the early centuries should be taken seriously and explored.

The Reply of Khalifatul Masih III

The newly-formed British Council of Chruches' Committee For Relationships With People Of Other Faiths has issued a statement with reference to the International Conference of the

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Ahmadiyya Movement on The Deliverance of Jesus from the Cross in which it affirms its readiness to open a constructive dialogue with among others, representatives of the Ahmadiyya Movement. The statement express apprehension that the publicity given to the Conference "may.....cause offence". I desire to announce that in holding the Conference the Ahmadiyya Movement has meant no offence and none should be taken. Throughout the Conference, Jesus, in whom we believe as a righteous prophet and true messenger of God, was referred to in terms of the deepest respect and reverence.

The statement points out that there are doctrinal differences between the Ahmadiyya Movement and orthodox Islamic authorities. I wish to make it clear that all Islamic sects, despite their differences, are united on the Unity of God, the righteousness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, on whom be peace and blessings of God and on his being the Seal of the Prophets and the most exalted on them all. On the question of the Unity of God and the doctrine of Trinity there is no difference whatever between us.

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It is further affirmed in the statement : Our relucatance to make public comment on the London Conference also stems from our awareness that Christianity has often indulged in aggressive and negative attacks on the central tenets of other religions, attacks of a sort comparable to these Ahmadiyya attackson the central Christian tenet. While we agree that Christianity has often indulged in aggressive and negative attacks on the central tenets of other religions in language which was open to serious objection, we cannot agree that the belief of the Ahmadiyya Movement and its publication through a conference, or otherwise, that Jesus was an exalted divine messenger and that nothing shou'd be attributed to him which should be inconsistent with his high status as a divine messenger, is an aggressive or negative attack.

The recognition by the Committee that "the death of Jesus Christ on the cross may seem a scandal and an affront to Divine justice" is a welcome announcement. This raises the hope that if the reality of these questions is expounded to our Christian brethern with love and true understanding they will give up their wrong tenets and will recognize that the belief that Jesus died an accursed death on the cross and that an innocent one was punished for the sins of the guilty would not only "seem" but would truly be a scandal and an affront to Divine justice.

We are happy that the British Council of Churches, through this Committee, has invited the Ahmadiyya Movement to conversations in the future in London and elsewhere on the difference batween us.

We accept this invitation and desire that these conversations should be held in an atmosphere of love and courtesy. We propose that these conversations should be held in London, Rome, a West African capital, an Asian capital and in the United States of America on dates and conditions to be agreed upon between the parties.

We would also welcome opportunities of dialogue with the representatives of the Catholic Church on the doctrinal differences between us, eitheir separately or in combination with other Christian Churchs, including the British Council of Churches.

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